Canoeists pa

Webster woman, Massachusetts and their dog urging conservation

By JOHN FINIGAN
Times-Union

Their plan is to canoe from the Pacific Ocean to the Atlantic Ocean — Oregon to Georgia — and spread a message: Save the water.

On June 14 of last year, Nancy DeWitte, 27, of Webster, and Tom Condon, 27, of Long Meadow, Mass., put their 17-foot fiberglass canoe into the waters of the Colombia River at Astoria, Oregon and began their "Paddle for Water."

According to Dewitte's mother, Louise DeWitte of 32 Meadow Drive, Webster, they are paddling across the country to proclaim the need for water conservation.

Along the way they pass out pamphlets, present slide shows and talk to people about ways to conserve water.

The pamphlet begins with a quote from an Indian chief.

"All things are connected. Whatever befalls the earth, befalls the children of the earth."

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The two paddlers a
night.

DeWitte, who grew up
H.W. Schroeder High Sch
She went to Hope College

Topfree protest Sunday to mark anniversary

Some of the women arrested in a protest last year will be demonstrating topfree again on Sunday to commemorate the eventthat drew national media attention.

The place and the time of the protest have not been disclosed, in part to discourage hecklers who attended the Cobbs Hill Park demonstration last year, said Ramona Santorelli, one of the original "Topfree Seven," the seven women arrested. She said organizers of this year's event would announce specifics to the media on Sunday.

Santorelli and six other women were charged with indecent exposure, a misdemeanor.

Last year, they intentionally sought arrest by disrobing from the waist up to challenge in court the state law which allows men, but not women, to appear nude above the waist in public.

In acquitting the women, City Court Judge Herman J. Walz upheld the constitutionality of the statute and ruled that the law should not have been applied to the women because they clearly showed that their actions were part of a protest. The Monroe County district attorney's office is appealing the ruling.

The protest last year at Cobbs Hill park. Seven were arrested.

Since their arrests and acquittals, Santorelli and Mary Lou Schloss have been speaking across the state at colleges. They hope that others will join in Sunday's protest in their home towns, Santorelli said.

District Attorney Howard R. Relin has said the women are subject to arrest if they protest again.